

Message Text

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ACTION SY-05

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FM AMCONSUL MILAN

TO AMEMBASSY ROME

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UNCLAS MILAN 0113

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ASEC

SUBJECT: USIS BREAK-IN, JANUARY 14, 1976

1. THE OFFICES OF USIS MILAN AT VIA BIGLI 11/A, WERE ENTERED AFTER CLOSING HOURS WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 14, 1976, BY A PERSON OR PERSONS UNAUTHORIZED, AND TO DATE UNKNOWN.

2. THE CIRCUMSTANCES WERE AS FOLLOWS: AFTER THE AUDIENCE ATTENDING A CLASSICAL FILM PROJECTION (WHICH ENDED AT 2240 HOURS) LEFT THE BUILDING, THE FRONT DOOR WAS LOCKED AND BOLTED FROM INSIDE AT ABOUT 2245 HOURS. STILL PRESENT INSIDE THE BUILDING WERE ERNESTO SORMANI AND ALDO FERRARIO, USIS LOCAL EMPLOYEES, AND GIANNI ROGNONI, CARETAKER OF THE ADJOINING BUILDING, VIA BIGLI, 11, THE COURTYARD OF HICH AFFORDS THE ONLY ACCESS TO THE USIS SIDE ENTRANCE. ROGNONI, WHO IS EMPLOYED ON AN OCCASIONAL BASIS, WHEN SECURITY REQUIREMENTS WARRANT, HAS BEEN CLEARED.

3. AFTER CHECKING THE PROJECTION ROOM AND THE REST OF THE BASEMENT AREA, FERRARIO LEFT VIA THE MAIN DOOR, WHICH SORMANI LOCKED AND BOLTED AFTER HIM. THEN SORMANI MADE A FINAL TOUR OF THE BASEMENT, LOCKING THE EMERGENCY EXIT DOOR FROM THE INSIDE, AND MAKING SURE ALL OTHER DOORS AND WINDOWS WERE SECURED, AND THAT ALL SHUTTERS (TAPPARELLE) THROUGHOUT THE BUILDING WERE SECURELY CLOSED. ROGNONI AND SORMANI THEN TURNED OFF THE MAIN LIGHT SWITCH AND LEFT THROUGH THE SIDE ENTRANCE, WHICH SORMANI LOCKED. SORMANI WENT OUT THROUGH THE MAIN DOOR OF VIA BIGLI 11, WHICH ROGNONI LOCKED AFTER
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HIM, RETIRING TO HIS APARTMENT, LOCATED JUST OVER PART OF

THE CORRIDOR LEADING TO THE USIS SIDE ENTRANCE.

4. AT ABOUT 2345 HRS., HE AND HIS WIFE WERE AROUNDED BY SOUNDS FROM BELOW. DESCENDING, HE FOUND THE USIS SIDE ENTRANCE OPEN AND THE LIGHTS ON. A CURSORY CHECK SHOWED THAT THE SECURING STEEL BAR CLOSURE AT THE FILING CABINET IN THE USIS ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT'S OFFICE WAS OUT OF PLACE AND LEANING AGAINST A DESK, AND ITS COMBINATION PADLOCK WAS LYING OPEN ON THE FLOOR NEAR THE CABINET. THE DRAWERS WERE CLOSED AND THE CABINET LOCK WAS LOCKED. AT ABOUT 2400 HRS, HE TELEPHONED THE BPAO, WALTER WELLS. WELLS TOLD HIM TO CALL POLICE AND ARRIVED ON THE SCENE HIMSELF AT ABOUT 2430, SHORTLY BEFORE THE ARRIVAL OF THE POLICE. HE OBSERVED THE SITUATION IN THE ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT'S OFFICE, AND MADE A CURSORY CHECK OF THE OTHER OFFICES AND THE LIBRARY, THEN CALLED THE QUESTURA.

5. THE POLICE, ARRIVED ABOUT 2435, AND WHILE SOME OFFICERS TALKED WITH ROGNONI AND HIS WIFE AND OTHERS DUSTED THE CABINET, PADLOCK, AND OTHER ITEMS FOR PRINTS, WELLS AND TWO OF THE OFFICERS CHECKED THE ENTIRE PREMISES CLOSELY FOR ANY POSSIBLE EXPLOSIVE OR INCENDIARY DEVICES. MEANWHILE, OFFICERS OF THE QUESTURA HAD ARRIVED, AND AFTER THEY HAD INTERROGATED WELLS AND THE ROGNONIS, THEY ACCOMPANIED WELLS ON ANOTHER INSPECTION OF THE AREA. USIS ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT CHIARA GRINONI, WHOM WELLS HAD CALLED, ARRIVED ABOUT 1:15, AND, OPENING THE FILING CABINET, ASCERTAINED THAT NOTHING WAS MISSING OR OUT OF PLACE.

6. AT 03:30 HOURS, AFTER EVERYONE ELSE HAD LEFT THE PREMISES, BPAO WELLS CLOSED AND LOCKED THE SIDE ENTRANCE, AND DEPARTED THROUGH THE MAIN DOOR OF VIA BIGLI 11, WHICH WAS LOCKED AFTER HIM BY ROGNONI.

7. IT WAS NOTED THAT NEITHER THE SIDE ENTRANCE TO USIS NOR THE MAIN DOOR OF VIA BIGLI 11 (OSTENSIBLY THE ONLY ROUTE OF ENTRY) SHOWED ANY SIGN OF FORCING, THAT WHOEVER ENTERED THREW THE MAIN SWITCH, (NOT EASILY LOCATABLE), AND EVIDENTLY WENT DIRECTLY TO THE ONLY PLACE IN USIS WHERE MONEY IS KEPT. BPAO WELLS REPORTED THE INCIDENT BY TELEPHONE AT ABOUT 0900 THE FOLLOWING MORNING, JANUARY 15, TO CONSUL GENERAL UNCLASSIFIED

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THOMAS W. FINA IN MILAN AND AT ABOUT 0910 TO DCPAO STANTON H. BURNETT AT USIS ROME.

8. AS OF MORNING OF JANUARY 19, POLICE HAD NO LEADS. FINA

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